

IN THE BEGINNING



Woodson County Midget

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Woodson County Historical Society
Yates Center, Kansas
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Lester A. Harding - Editor

EDITOR'S NOTES —

The majority of all the pictures used in this quarterly are reproductions taken off the original pictures by Walter A. Bowers. Walter has a contraption fixed so that he can take a picture of any photograph or article from any newspaper, magazine or sketch that is made. We certainly appreciate his work along this line. It is a great help in editing this magazine.

The subscription list of In The Beginning is still growing. We find that many people here in Yates Center and over the county have never seen a copy or even heard of it. Our subscribers could help us by telling about it.

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Baseball was the leading sport in the Yates Center High School in 1914-15 when this picture was taken.



Back row—Boyd Agnew, O.F.; Faye Woodard, O.F.; Maynard Agnew, 3rd;
Center row—Clarence Stockebrand, O.F.; John Woodard, 1st; Earl Harrod,
Pitcher; Bottom row—Donald Shenk, S.S.; Calvin Davidson, Catcher; Will
Carrol, 2nd.

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IN THE BEGINNING

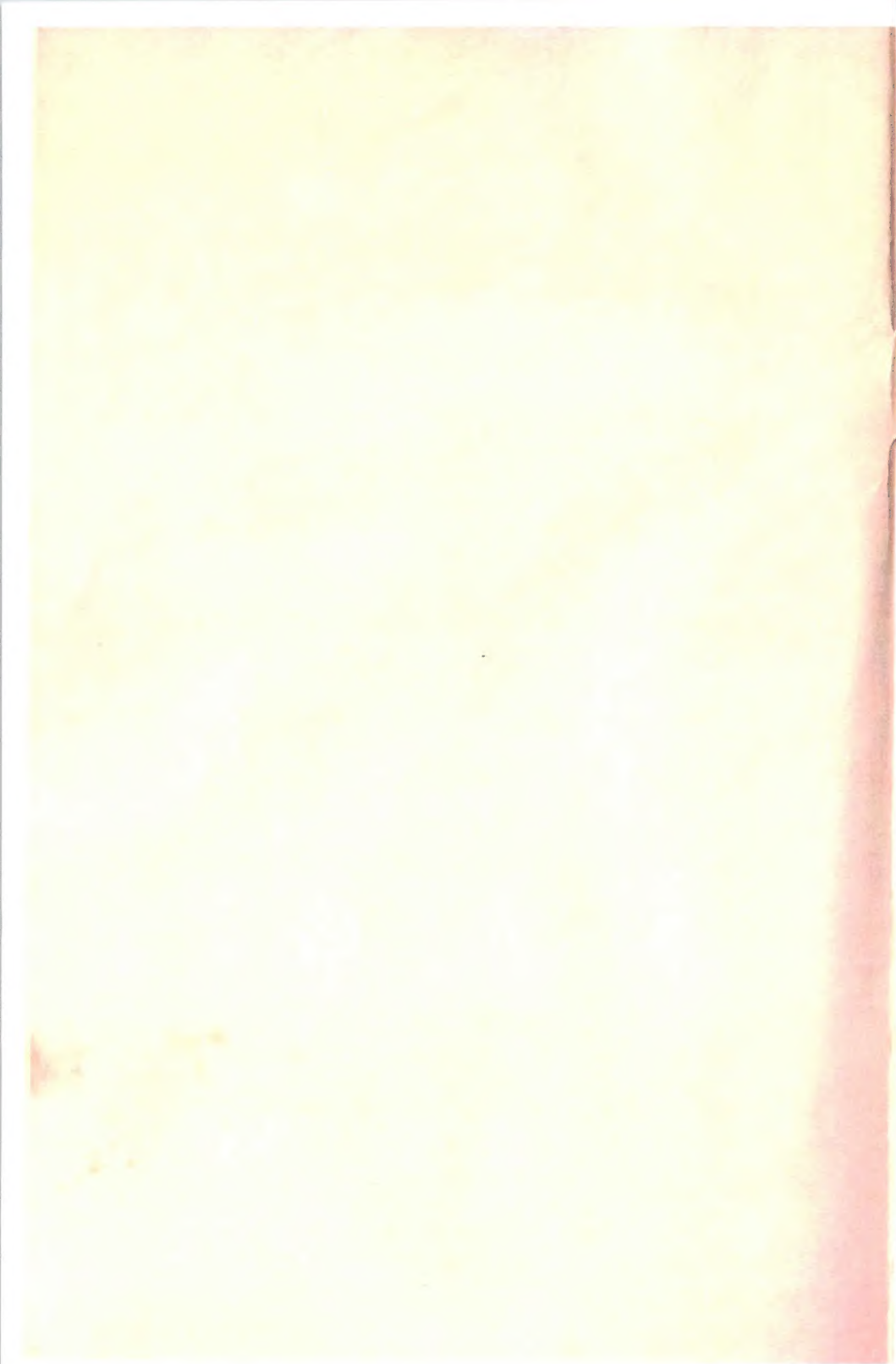
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Woodson County Historical Society

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WOODSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Organized March, 1965

Due to the successful financial and membership drive conducted early in the year the membership of the Woodson County Historical Society will exceed all previous years. The membership is over 200, with around 83 of these taking out Life Memberships.

The financial drive also made it possible to build a 30 by 40 foot addition to the south side of the present Museum, adding some much needed room for exhibits and a workshop.

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In Memorium

J. A. "Bert" Allen 80 February 12, 1970

Mr. Allen had been a resident of Woodson County for around 61 years, coming here from Hennepin, Ill., in 1909. He was a farmer and stockman on Big Sandy for several years until his retirement to Yates Center.

* * * * *

At the regular dinner meeting of the Woodson County Historical Society, May 19, 1970, Memorial services were held for the six members who have died in the past year—Merle E. Weide, W. J. O'Donnell, Ray V. Stoll, Calvin DeLay, W. J. Riley, and James A. Allen.

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Front Cover Picture—A Woodson County girl who traveled with the Ringling Brothers Circus, as a midget, around the turn of the century, was May Jennie Meadows. Her parents were Mr. and Mrs. Layton Meadows. Jennie was born on a farm five miles east and one and one-half miles north of Yates Center, on the farm now owned by Earl Schornick.

While traveling with the circus Jennie met Major Ray. On February 6, 1891, at the courthouse in Yates Center a marriage license was issued to Willie H. Ray, age 30, of Cotton ? and May Jennie Meadows, age 19, of Yates Center. They were married by Azon McDale, M.E. Pastor, in Yates Center. The picture of Major Ray and his bride was taken at the studio of I. N. Kent of Humboldt, Kansas.

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Join and support the Woodson County Historical Society. Regular membership dues to the Society are \$2.00 per calendar year and Life memberships are \$25.00.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON —

One of the best known and most talked of man in the county in his time was Alex Hamilton. He is best remembered by most for his premature aeroplane story of 1897. However, the life of Hamilton from the time he arrived in Kansas until the time of his death, was an interesting life.

Alexander Hamilton was born in Gallatin County, Kentucky in 1832. His parents were John O. Hamilton and Hannah Gregg Hamilton. He was the second of ten children. At the age of sixteen he attended the Covington College, later becoming a student at Western Collington Institute at Patriot, Indiana. Afterward he graduated from a business college in Marietta, Ohio, and later studied in a law office in Louisville.

When eighteen years old he went to Tennessee where he taught school for two years. Returning to his home in Kentucky, Hamilton took up the study of law, being admitted to the bar in 1854.

In 1855 Hamilton left Kentucky and traveled for two years through Missouri, Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska, looking for a place he liked to settle down in. He stopped for awhile in Clinton County, Mo.

This was in the days of the bloody border warfare between the pro-slavery groups in Missouri and the free state settlers of Kansas Territory.

Alex Hamilton was appointed captain of a company of one hundred men organized at Plattsburg, Mo. After eight months of taking part in the dangerous border warfare, Hamilton decided he wanted to make his home in Kansas. With his company he came to Kansas where he met John W. Geary, Governor of the Territory of Kansas. Here Hamilton, after a consultation with the Governor, surrendered his command and the company was disbanded.

Hamilton came to LeRoy, Coffey County, in the fall of 1856, and began the practice of law before the county was organized. He attended the State Legislature in 1857, and succeeded in having the county established. In February 1857, Hamilton was appointed by the Assembly as the first county clerk and first register of deeds of Coffey County. He also ran a grocery store and bought considerable farm land that he managed. At the first meeting of the Coffey County Commissioners, Hamilton was authorized to draw up plans for a temporary courthouse at LeRoy. At the April meeting he was appointed as a special agent to borrow \$800 to build the courthouse, but he resigned before any action was taken.

On February 22, 1858, Alexander Hamilton was married to Miss Jane Scott, at LeRoy. Her father, John B. Scott, was the founder of LeRoy. Scott was a major-general in the militia in this section of the country and was known later as General Scott. Scott was also an Indian agent.

During the Civil War Hamilton was connected with the Home Guards. Later he entered the employ of the government as wagon master and was appointed as sutler. He next was appointed to buy cattle for the Indians. He could relate many hair-breadth escapes while in this work among the Indians.

Hamilton, with his family, moved into Woodson County in 1866, and purchased 520 acres along Cherry Creek. Here he continued his political activities. In 1871, he was elected as sheriff of Woodson County on the Democrat ticket. The Neosho Falls Advertiser of November 9, 1871, gave this report: "Alex Hamilton, the newly-elected sheriff, commenced duties yesterday as deputy under sheriff Philips. His first act was to build a fire!"

Alexander and Lucinda Jane Hamilton were the parents of fourteen children: Mary Florence, who married Thomas W. Plummer. Their children were Lenore, Claire (Mrs. C. G. Plumb) and Bernard.

Sarah Elizabeth, who married Fred Pearl. Their children were Alex, Glenn, Jennie (Mrs. Roy Solander) and May. John O., who married Emma Morgan, had no children.

Charles C. who married Nancy Hyorell. Their children were Jennie, Carroll and Marie.

Anna Maude, who married Edward Veteto. Their children were Otis, Edgar, Marjane, Grace, Horace and Gus.

Alex Oscar, who married Stella Brown. Their children were Zarley, Clarence and Mabel.

Gus R., who married Luella Hoppe. Their children were Jane, Grace, and Robert.

William Herbert, who married Ora Whittaker. Their children were Percy and Leah.

Clarence Percival, who married Lily Howard. Their children were Alice, Howard, Maynard and Dorothy.

Nannie Grace, who married Eber Holliday. Their children were Catherine, Martha, and Pauline.

Stanley Wallace, who married Mora Alspaugh. Their children were Elizabeth (Mrs. J. W. Linde), twins Isabel and Clarabel, Josephine (Brown) and Stanley Wallace Jr.

Nellie Amanda, who married Frank Hartwell. Their children were Virginia, Louisana, Maryland, Texas and Caroline.

Georgia A. and Harvey L. both died while small children.

A. Hamilton was the last postmaster at Everett and the first postmaster at Vernon.

The Alexander Hamilton Woodson County homestead consisted of 520 acres along Cherry Creek about a mile south of Vernon. This was a well improved farm with a herd of 150 cattle, 50 to 200 Poland China hogs and 200 sheep.

It was from this home that he saw the alleged airship in 1897, many



A picture of the Hamilton family taken in the late 1890's. Back row, left to right: W. Herbert, Glen Pearl, S. Wallace, Thomas Plummer, Mrs. Charley Hamilton, Charley C., John O., Grace (Mrs. Eber Holliday), Clarence P., Neil (Mrs. Hartwell), Gus R. Second row: Fred Pearl, Ed Veteto, Maude (Mrs. Veteto), Alexander Hamilton, his wife, Jane, Mary "Mollie" (Mrs. T. Plummer), Sarah "Sallie" (Mrs. F. Pearl), Lenore Plummer, Jennie Pearl, Alex O., Mrs. Alex O. Alex O. is holding son Clarence. Bottom row: All grandchildren—Otis, Grace and Edgar Veteto; Jennie, Marie and Carol Hamilton; Claire Plummer (Mrs. C. G. Plumb), May, Alex and Zarley Pearl.

many years before the invention of the airplane as we know them. We will tell about Alexander Hamilton and his flying saucer story in another issue.

Besides being quite a storyteller Alex Hamilton was quite a practical joker. The Woodson County Post, published at Neosho Falls, carried this item in May, 1873.

"While at Toronto last week we heard there had been a heavy hail-storm on Sandy Creek and Sheriff Hamilton told us that six days after the storm the roads were impassable and that in ravines the hail stones were yet 17 feet and 4½ inches deep and that there would be ice there all summer. And anyone who knows Alex would not dispute it for a minute!" Again in January, 1878, the Woodson County Post states: "One road overseer in Everett Township gave bond in the sum of \$100,000. Of course it was Alexander Hamilton!"

Jane Scott Hamilton came to Coffey County with her parents in 1855. They had come to Kansas with a tribe of the Sac and Fox Indians from Iowa. Her father was an agent and trader with these Indians. His claim was where the town of LeRoy now is. To quote Alexander Hamilton in his own language he "married about all the young women there was in that section of the country at the time."

In the early days that the Hamiltons lived along Cherry Creek, there was an Indian campsite nearby that different groups of Indians would camp at when traveling from the reservations. A tribe of Cherokees camped here one winter. Mrs. Hamilton had several experiences with them. The Indians seemed to think that they could have about anything they wanted and were not backward in demanding what they wanted. Mrs. Hamilton learned to sing one of the Indian lullabys in their native tongue. She taught this lullaby to some of her grandchildren. Claire Plummer Plumb learned to sing it and it has been recorded on tape.

Another time two Indians, believed to be of the Commanche tribe, came to the house demanding something. Mrs. Hamilton bundled up two of the little girls and told them to get to the Howard home as quickly as they could. The Howard home was about a half mile on up Cherry Creek.

About 1879, Alexander Hamilton was appointed by the U.S. Government to buy cattle for the Indians. For around five years, assisted by his twin sons, John and Charles, and possibly others, he made cattle drives to and from the Indian Territory and different parts of Kansas. His twin sons were fifteen at the time he started this project.

Neosho Falls Advertiser, November 9, 1871 —

"Our friend Alex Hamilton accused a young man of stealing his horse. The young man went away vowing vengeance most terrible. On last Tuesday evening, three men armed with guns, were seen in the timber near Mr. Hamilton's house and inquired of a man passing by if Mr. Hamilton was at the election yet. Mr. Hamilton, hearing of it, loaded his gun and went to the timber, but the rascals had disappeared. It was supposed that the young man spoken of was one of the number."

We do not know whether the following had any connection to this horse stealing or not, but in the county commissioners' minutes of

April 7, 1868, there was the following entry: "Alex Hamilton filed an affidavit charging one James Goodwin with taking a stray mare pony out of the county. The board ordered that the county attorney begin prosecution of said James Goodwin immediately."

As it was mentioned in the beginning of this article Alexander Hamilton was one of the best known and most talked about man and was in the midst of most every event concerning this area. He had been a school teacher, lawyer, sheriff, postmaster, storyteller and many other things. At one time he, with several other men, was accused of stealing cattle. The name of Alex Hamilton was printed in local newspapers probably more times than any other one man. When his "airship" story of 1897 was told, his name became familiar in many daily newspapers throughout the United States and even in England.

While Hamilton was a practical joker, there was one time at least when the joke was on him. It was about 1871 when he was sheriff. He had gone to the home of a close friend, "Uncle Jimmie" Baldwin, who established quite a ranch on Turkey Creek. Hamilton had come to serve notice to Baldwin about some delinquent taxes. Baldwin insisted that the sheriff inspect his new stone smokehouse and the fine meat they had stored in it. Uncle Jimmy opened the smokehouse door and stepped back for Alex to enter first. As soon as Alex was inside, the door was quickly closed and the padlock sprung. Uncle Jimmy went to the house and told Mrs. Baldwin that Alex Hamilton would be there for dinner and he wanted to be sure and have some of that good ham for him. It was about an hour later when Mrs. Baldwin went to get her ham that she discovered Hamilton in the smokehouse. Whenever Baldwin could catch Hamilton in a crowd he never failed to tell of the time his wife caught the sheriff in the smokehouse.

Another time when Alex Hamilton was on his way to Yates Center and was passing the Jim Wiley home about three quarters of a mile east of the Pleasant View school, Doug Wiley, a small boy, was playing along the road. Alex stopped to talk to him. He saw and caught a small garden snake. He held it and showed Doug how to hold it just back of the head and explained what a nice pet it would make. Then carefully putting it inside of the boy's shirt, sent him to the house to show his pet to his mother. His mother screamed and Doug let go of the snake. It was some time before Alex was welcome at the Wiley home.

It seems like the stories, both fact and fiction, about Alexander Hamilton of Woodson County, are almost endless. These last two stories were written to the editor several years ago by Orrin C. Rose, who was born and grew up in the Pleasant View vicinity. Rose wrote that it was his good fortune to learn a lot from the stories told to him by early settlers, among them Alex Hamilton, Mike Carroll, Charles Howard, Wm. Cooper and others. In the next issue of *In The Beginning* we will tell how the airship story that was told by Alexander Hamilton came into being and about the first Unidentified Flying Object.

Setting Out a Hedge Fence—Woodson County Post—
Neosho Falls, Kansas, January 7, 1874

The Post editor canvassed the opinion of Everett township farmers about the best method of setting out hedge (Osage Orange) plants. R. F. Repass thinks hedge plants should not be set farther than 8 inches apart, while I. N. Holloway says 6 inches apart is enough.

Alex Hamilton recommends that plants be set 16 inches apart and then weave the limbs together when old enough. J. W. McKelvey prefers setting them out with a spade. Repass prefers a plow. About the middle of April is recommended as a time to transplant. J. B. Wiley says plants will not live well if covered with a plow. M. C. Smith says you can get them as straight with the plow as with a spade.

* * * * *

ALONG THE VERDIGRIS VALLEY —

Along in the spring of 1858, a caravan of wagons drawn by oxen, arrived in the Verdigris Valley just south of where Toronto now is and camped for the night. The wagon train had been headed for the Walnut River Valley near El Dorado, but as they camped for the night the leader of the wagon train and the rest of the group held a council and decided that the country here was what they were looking for and knew that the Flint Hills were still ahead of them. They scouted around and found few settlers and decided that they would go no farther.

The leader of the wagon train was Samuel Hase. In the wagon with him was his wife, two sons Henry and Jacob and a small daughter. The wagon train had come from Fredericktown, near Cape Girardeau, Mo. Also with the wagon train were Samuel's two brothers, Daniel and John Hase, and Jake Penturf, a brother of Mrs. Samuel Hase.

This group settled up and down the Verdigris from a mile south of Toronto on into Wilson County.

Other settlers in this community when the Hases' came here were Thomas Carlisle, Smith Wilhite, Bill Pledger, Lewis Thompson, and Wm. Babb. Some of these we may be able to tell about later. Practically all of the land homesteaded by these settlers is now covered with water of the Toronto Reservoir.

Just to the north and west of what is now Toronto Point was a "river valley" tavern that was started there in 1858 or before. Here travelers could find meals and an overnight stopping place.

Samuel Hase built a log cabin with a loft and no stairway. His two boys were lifted into the loft at bedtime and had to be helped down in the morning.

The tavern mentioned above was a very rough place and in fact this whole community throughout here got that name. The story is told that travelers quit going through here as they were apt to be stopped and all their possessions taken, including their team and wagons and oftentimes the people themselves disappeared.

About the only law in this corner of Woodson County was a group of vigilantes and most of the settlers in this community were members of the vigilante committee.

The law of vigilantes was often very swift and harsh. Many times

innocent men were executed. Sometimes the acts of the vigilante group was to their advantage as they wanted it. Names of the group were not always known. We were given the names of this certain group of vigilantes along the Verdigris and the captain's name. We may tell who they were and some of their deeds later, but for now we will not.

* * * * *

The George Mentzer Family

Around 100 years ago, George Mentzer, a veteran of the Civil War first came to Woodson County, seeking a home here on the prairie. On May 16, 1870, he made a contract with the MKT Railway to purchase 160 acres in the northeast corner of Section 6-24-14. Isaac T. Goodnow was the Katy land agent in Neosho Falls at that time. Mentzer made a deposit of \$67 on the \$738.67 that the five-year contract called for. He then returned to his home at Kewaunee, Henry County, Illinois.



George and Emeline Mentzer

The following year, early in the spring of 1871, George Mentzer with his wife Emeline, and two sons, Charles O. and John Fred, and a close friend, George W. Allen, came to Kansas in a covered wagon. They arrived in Neosho Falls in May. Obtaining rooms for Mrs. Mentzer and the two small boys at the Falls House where they were to stay until a home was made for them on the homestead.

Mentzer and Allen then loaded up some supplies and lumber and headed for the new homestead that was all prairie grass except where West Owl Creek cut across the southwest corner of the quarter section. They built a small two-room cabin and some necessary fences and sheds.

Mentzer then went to Neosho Falls and brought his family to the new home. Allen, who was a single man, stayed with the Mentzers for awhile until he obtained the southeast quarter of Section 36-24-14. George Allen married a school teacher from Toronto and moved onto his new farm (where Harley Mentzer lives).

The George Mentzer farm is still owned by descendants, known as the John Williams farm.

George Mentzer was a native of Stowe, Mass., where he was born June 12, 1838. His parents were Phillip and Orinda (Miles) Mentzer. There were ten children in this family. Phillip Mentzer was a native of Germany.

When the Civil War broke out G. Mentzer enlisted as a member of Company C, 24th Massachusetts Infantry. We believe that George Allen was with him throughout the war.

He participated in several battles. In one battle he was one of nine soldiers of his company to survive. Mentzer was discharged at Petersburg, Virginia, after three years of service.

Following the war he returned to his native state and spent the succeeding winter at Boston. He made his way to Kewaunee, Illinois where he met and married a young lady who was clerking in a store.

George Mentzer and Emeline Minnick were married on January 1, 1867, at Kewaunee. His bride was a daughter of John Minnick, a Pennsylvania German. While named Emeline, she was known mostly as Emma. They were the parents of eight children; namely, Charles O., who married Nettie Wells and their children were Gladys (Mrs. Roy Green), twins Paul and Pauline (Mrs. Osmond Briles, Leslie, and Herbert.

John Fred, who married Anna Wells, their children were Hazel (Mrs. Ed Herold), Cecil (Mrs. Emil Beine), Pearl (Mrs. A. Peterson), Marjorie (Mrs. Paul Weide), Fred, Harley, Mildred (Mrs. John VanValkenburg), Aleta (Mrs. Wendell Tolle).

Susie May, who married Ed Tunnicliff. They had no children.

Henry A., who married May Litton. They had a daughter, Dixie. A son died in infancy.

Phillip E., who married Anna Sheflin. They had three sons, Howard, Lauren and Ivan.

Ernest E., who married Edith Dummond. They had eleven children—George Edward, Talmadge "Tye", Fleta (Mrs. Leon VanValkenburg), Austin, M. Burdette, Keith, Juanita (Mrs. Charles Baldwin), Norryce, Lovell, who was killed in action in World War II, and Donald. A son

Laddie died at the age of six months.

Clara E., who married John W. Williams. They had twelve children—Glenn M., Goldie M. (Mrs. Ted Brodman), Edith E. (Mrs. Lester Harding), John Harold, Leo L., Freddie Lloyd, Helen D. (Mrs. Orval Smith), George Wesley, Clifford W., Letha M., Doris Ann (Claxton), and Verna L. (Mrs. LeRoy Faherty). Clarence A., who married Grace Graham, had no children.

In the first years of their life here along the branch of Owl Creek Indians would camp along the creek as they would travel from the reservation to the Indian Territory to the south. They were friendly Indians, but inveterate beggars. George Mentzer smoked a pipe. These Indians would often beg tobacco from him. On one occasion Mentzer found a couple of Indians digging in the bank along west Owl Creek. They were digging out a skunk. He asked them what they were going to do with it. They replied, "Eat 'em! Heaps of good eats in 'em."

Some of the Indians would come to the Mentzer house and bargain for eggs. They seemed to delight in scaring the two little boys, Charley and Fred.

George Mentzer had one of the first telephones in the county. He and C. B. Goodale, who lived about two miles to the north, each got telephones and fixed a line between them so they could talk.

Early on a Sunday morning in December, 1887, the George Mentzer family was getting ready to go to Sunday school at the Methodist Church in Yates Center. The Mentzer home was three miles west and about a mile and three-quarters north of Yates Center.

In the midst of their getting ready a man came to the door. He explained that he was taking a census of some kind although Mentzer observed that the man was carrying a gun. Mr. Mentzer had sold some hogs the day before and his first thought was that the man had followed him from Yates Center. Then he remembered that a man accused of stealing cattle had escaped the law and was in the hills of Belmont township. With this suspicion, Mentzer sent word of the man evidently as the rest of the family went to church in Yates Center.

The story of the cattle theft went back to the week before this, when a man by the name of Charley Mills, who worked for a Mr. Hobson of Belmont township, had been arrested on the preceding Thursday for stealing three head of cattle. The cattle belonged to a Mr. Hayward of Allen County, who was pasturing them in the Hobson pasture. This farm was where a large stone house stood for many years and was known as the Adamson farm, a short distance east from Big Sandy Creek.

Mills had stolen the cattle and sold them to a butcher in Yates Center. He then stole three head of cattle from a neighbor and turned them into the pasture with the rest of the Hayward cattle. The evidence brought against him was almost certain but when he was brought before the justice, he asked for a continuance till the following Friday morning to obtain witnesses. During Thursday night he escaped from Constable Metz, who was guarding him. Friday morning Metz went down to Belmont township and caught sight of the man in the hills and brush and fired two or three shots at him, but Mills got away from

him. On Saturday morning Metz and Constable Throughman of Belmont found and arrested their man early in the morning. They all went to Throughman's for breakfast and while Throughman was taking care of the horses the prisoner got hold of gun, knocked Metz down and again escaped.

Word was spread throughout Belmont and to Yates Center. A sheriff's posse was organized. The hills and woods throughout Belmont township was guarded and searched all day long but no prisoner was located. Seems like the only "game" the posse saw was numerous deer. One man reported seeing 17 deer in one bunch.

Somehow Mills eluded the posse and got out of the hills and to the Ed Currie home where he was permitted to stay all night and on Sunday morning walked to the George Mentzer home on West Owl Creek. The man wanted to engage board and lodging for two or three days at the Mentzer home.

When Mentzer sent word to town about the man whom he suspected as the missing prisoner, two Yates Center fellows, Joe Allen and Will Pruitt, who evidently thought they would get some glory and perhaps some reward, took it into their heads to go out and capture the prisoner.

It was mealtime and the Mentzer family, including Mr. and Mrs. Mentzer, the six sons and two daughters, and the stranger were at the table when Allen and Pruitt first came to a window and then to the door. They came in, got the drop on the stranger, then asked Mrs. Mentzer and two daughters to go into the other room. Mrs. Clara (Mentzer) Williams, who still owns the Mentzer homestead recalls that although she was only 5 years old at the time, and she was very much frightened when the men asked them to go into the other room.

The two young men were having some difficulty until Abe Smith, a nearby neighbor and early day sheriff of Woodson County arrived and helped them. Smith was not sheriff at this time. The prisoner had gotten on his knees in a pleading position and was creeping closer to one of the boys before Mr. Mentzer stopped him.

The prisoner, Charley Mills, waived examination and on Monday was taken to jail at Eureka. He was an old offender and a dangerous man. A short time later he escaped from the jail at Eureka and that's the last trace of him that we found.

* * * * *

SCHOOLS OF WOODSON COUNTY

Down through the years there has been around seventy-three different schools organized in this county. This does not include the ones that were re-numbered after consolidation. We will list them in numerical order, but not necessarily in order of when school was first held. We will give them in this order and tell about them as we go along, with their history as we can.

Dist. No.	1—Whitney-Byron	37—North Maple Grove
	2—Stines-Askren	38—Duck Creek—Pleasant Hill
	3—Toronto	39—New York Valley
	4—Oak Grove	40—Flower Hill
	5—Owl Creek-Stonepile	41—Peck
	6—Spawr -	42—Fairview
Jt.	7—Pumkin Keleg	43—Nikkeltown
	8—Neosho Falls	44—Oakland-Poor Farm
	9—New Salem-Carlisle	45—Stony Point
	10—No schoolhouse	46—Clear Springs
	11—Philmore	47—Defiance
	12—Dry Creek	48—South Maple Grove
	13—Mt. Pisgah	49—Finney
	14—Cherry Creek	50—Baldwin-Phelps
	15—Durand	51—Yates Center
	16—Kalida	52—Lily
	17—Rose	53—Excelsior
	18—Brush-Pleasant Valley	54—Dutro
	19—Jewett-Big Sandy	55—Bayless
	20—Cherry Creek	56—Stone
	Hamilton-Vernon	57—Keck
	21—Mound Valley	58—Belmont
	22—Reedy-Prairie Flower	59—Poverty Flat- Bell Racket
	23—Otter Springs	60—Little Sandy
	24—Hardscrabble-Hopewell	61—Goodale
	25—McClannahan	62—Cope
	26—Plum Creek	63—Windy Point-Oil Glen
	27—Bramlette-Piqua	64—Newton
	28—Surprise-West Buffalo	65—Parallel
	29—Blume	66—Lovett
	30—South Star	67—Cantrell-'Possum Trot
	31—Pearsoll-Mt. Pleasant	68—Liberal Hill
	32—Claybank	69—Cedarvale
	33—Center Ridge	70—Harmony
	34—North Star	71—Prairie View
	35—Pleasant View	
	36—Jt. Crandall in Coffey Co.	

Schools —

One source of information stated that the first school taught in the county was on the Verdigris just to the west of where Toronto now is. When the town was organized it was moved onto the townsite.

Another source stated that the first school was at Neosho Falls. They were both started in 1858. The first school building was evidently at Verdigris, a log cabin.

The first school, taught at Neosho Falls by Miss Emma Coulter, was in the summer of 1858. Following this term Ebenezer H. Curtis opened a private school in a building in the Falls. When the Civil War broke out Curtis joined the Union army and became a colonel of a colored regiment. The winter of 1860-61, a private school was taught by George Waite. The following winter Mrs. Mary Brengle taught a school in her home with an enrollment of twenty-five pupils. The first public school taught in Neosho Falls was by Thomas Holland, in a building that had been a cooper's store. The proprietor of this store had left the Falls and joined the Rebel Army and word came back that he had been killed in action.

In 1863, the county superintendent, E. J. Brown began the organization of schools and the numbering of districts. They were numbered consecutively by townships. Number 1, Owl Creek township; No. 1, Neosho Falls township; No. 1 Liberty township; No. 1, Belmont, were all organized in January of that year and No. 1, Verdigris in April. These were the five townships in the county at that time.

In 1865 a new law was passed whereby the school districts were to be numbered consecutively in the county. Several schools wanted to be No. 1. Neosho Falls especially wanted the honor of being No. 1. W. B. Stines of upper Turkey Creek, was county superintendent and gave the first two numbers to school districts in Liberty township. District No. 2 was Mr. Stines' home district.

Most of these rural schools were known as "subscription" schools. The parents of pupils attending the school had to pay or subscribe a certain amount for each child attending the school. This subscription went toward defraying the expenses of the district. The teacher would also board at different homes in the district.

The first school records kept in the county were in 1867. S. J. Williams was the county superintendent. This year there were 21 districts, but just 19 reported. The whole number of children between the ages of 5 to 21 were 541 white and one colored. However, there were only 364 enrolled, with an average attendance of 186. The average school term was $3\frac{1}{4}$ months—around three terms a year.

On February 22, 1866, there were eleven school districts but only ten schools organized. District No. 10 had been organized to the west

and north of Neosho Falls, but for some reason the school was short lived and shortly the district was discontinued and taken into other nearby districts.

In some of the first districts school was held in private homes until a building could be erected. In 1867 there were thirteen schoolhouses of which ten of them were made of logs and the other three were frame.

In 1868 there were twenty-one organized districts, with 700 white children and four colored children. But there were only 415 of these enrolled in school with an average attendance of 226. There were seven log and seven frame schoolhouses.

In 1871 there were 46 schoolhouses—8 log, 35 frame, 2 stone and one brick. In 1873 the number of schoolhouses jumped to 57.

In 1867 there were six male teachers, with an average monthly wage of \$31.14, and nine female teachers with an average monthly wage of \$19.00.

In 1867 the following textbooks were used: McGuffey's readers and speller, Spencerian penmanship, Ray's arithmetic, Cornall geography, Goodrich history and Pinnea's grammar. In that year the county received \$357.57 from the state school fund and the total amount paid for teachers wages was \$1,315.50.

In 1879 there were fifty-nine school districts with the total population between the ages of five and 21 being 2,502. However, the pupils enrolled were 2,086, with an average attendance of 1,225. The total expenditures for that year were \$14,662.03.

In 1900 there were 69 organized school districts with 88 teachers employed with the total teachers wages of \$21.08 being paid.

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Religious services were held in practically every rural schoolhouse in Woodson County during the lifetime of the school. Church and Sunday school was held in some cases before the church buildings were built and others were used because of being more convenient.

There were many denominations, including United Brethren, Seventh Day Adventist, German Evangelical, Quaker, Congregational, Christian, Baptist, Christian Scientist, Methodist, Church of God, Mennonite, Union services of different denominations were held at several schoolhouses.

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A First Settler of Owl Creek Township —

Andreas History of Kansas, published in 1883 gave the only report of this pioneer family that we have found as far as history is concerned. The history is rather brief; in 1858 a settler named John Coleman, living on Owl Creek was called to his door and shot dead by unknown men. No reason was given for the act except that he was known to be a Free-State man. Another place in this same history tells that he was the first settler in Owl Creek township, coming there in 1856.

In neither case was any mention made of any other member of the family. It was in the records of the Probate Judge we found that there were other members of the Coleman family along Owl Creek at that time.

Several years ago we built a story around this John Coleman, believing he came from Franklin County, Kansas, where the name was Franklin Coleman, who had killed a man named Dow over a dispute about some land. This Coleman, however, was a pro-slavery man. The account of this killing was found in different histories. The last they gave of this Coleman was in November 1855, when, with his family in a wagon left that vicinity in Franklin County.

It was in the late winter or early spring of 1856, when the Coleman family came into Woodson County, along where Cherry Creek, Plum Creek and Owl Creek all began to merge together. We checked the grave along Cherry Creek where the stone gave the name of Frederick Coleman, age 24, who died in March, 1858. The date coincided with the killing of John Coleman, mentioned in the Andreas History. However the first names were confusing.

In the records of the Probate Court, Woodson County, Kansas Territory, we found the answer, at least a part of our riddle: In the Territorial days when a person died, having property but no will made, the Probate Judge would first appoint an administrator, then two or three persons to appraise the value of each article, large and small, of the dead person. The appraisers were usually nearby neighbors.

What seems to be the first case of this kind in Woodson County was that of Frederick Coleman, who died in March, 1858. He evidently was not married. The administrator of his estate was his brother John Coleman. A stone was erected that is still legible.

John Woolman, one of the first settlers of Woodson County in the Neosho Falls vicinity was the Probate Judge. Woolman was the first Probate Judge of Woodson County, and also the first to hold that office in Coffey County. Woolman appointed George Jacob Sietz, Rudolph Orth and Ernest Linder to appraise the property of Frederick Coleman. The property was to be sold at private sale on July 17, 1858. A part of the property listed was as follows:

1 yoke oxen, 5 yrs.	\$75.00	1 yoke oxen, 3 yrs.	70.00
1 yoke oxen	70.00	1 calf, 1 yr. old	10.00

1 horse	\$50.00
wagon	40.00
harness	15.00
breaking plow	12.00
washtub	.75
washboard	.12
set of plates	.18
set of tea cups	.10
suit of clothes	5.00
saddle bags	1.00
coffee mill	.15

1 candle stick	.05
1 tin cup	.02
musket	.31

One claim--the southwest quarter of Section 20-25-17, claim made on April 6, 1856. (Woodson County had not all been legally surveyed at that time).

The value of the claim was set at \$500. Most of the personal property was purchased by the appraisers and other neighbors. No mention was made of who got the claim, although none of these settlers had a legal right to their claims, as the land was still New York Indian Reservation.

According to the Probate Court record it was December 16, 1859, instead of 1858, when John Coleman was killed. Local stories of how he was killed vary. One was that he was shot by vigilantes who had trailed him from some other location. Another tale was that he had stolen some cattle from a herd that was bedded down in a bend of Owl Creek to the south and east. The herd was being driven from southwest and was headed for Kansas City. The story was told that the men in charge of the herd went to Coleman's cabin, called him out and hung him. It was also told that Christopher Huffmaster, who lived a mile or so down Owl Creek from the Coleman home, was at the Coleman cabin when he was killed.

However, we still cling to the story that he was shot as we will tell later.

The administrators for the estate of John Coleman were Adan Coleman and Amanda Coleman. Amanda was the widow of John Coleman. They had a daughter Barbara. Just who Adam was we do not know but presume another brother. Chris Huffmaster, Rudolph and Michael Sidler were the appraisers of this estate. Articles exempted from the appraisal and reserved for the widow Amanda Coleman were six yards of cloth, 100 bushel corn, 600 pounds pork, 4 bushels potatoes, 1 feather bed, 4 blankets, 1 stove and furniture to it ?, 2 sets knives and forks, 1 set of plates, 1 coffee mill, 1 coffee pot, 1 flatiron.

Articles appraised for sale of the estate of Coleman were:

1 yoke of red oxen	\$40.00	A wagon	\$15.00
1 yoke red & white	50.00	1 2-horse plow	8.00
1 cow, bl. & white	20.00	1 harrow	2.50
1 cow blue	16.00	1 shovel plow	7.00
1 cow red	18.00	1000 ft. lumber	20.00
1 steer	8.00	300 bushel corn	60.00

1 colt	25.00	many tools	
2 sheep	4.00	1 musket	.50
4 pigs	4.00	Bible	.25

1 claim—the northeast quarter of Section 19-25-17 with Cherry Creek running through the center of it.

Some of the expenses of the J. Coleman estate were: To R. Orth for trip to LeRoy, \$2.50; trip to Belmont, \$1.50; trip to Humboldt, \$2.50; trip to Neosho Falls, \$2.50; for butchering, \$2.50.

To W. Gisher of Fisher, one night's visit dressing wound, \$12.00. Another visit dressing wound, \$10.00. (This is the reason we believe that Coleman was shot.) Who Gisher or Fisher was we never learned, but presume that he was one of the pioneer doctors of that period in that area.

Amanda Coleman had received \$148.30 from the estate, but the case was not settled for some time. It was brought up in the October term of court of 1862 and again in 1863 term of court.

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The Museum of the Woodson County Historical Society is now open and ready for visitors. There are many articles of interest on display in this old stone building. We will mention a few of these through these pages. One article of value is a copy of the Vicksburg, Miss., Daily Citizen, printed Thursday July 2, 1863. This copy was printed on wallpaper during the siege of Vicksburg during the Civil War. It is one of the last issues that was printed on wallpaper as the Confederates had surrendered Vicksburg on that day.

Another paper of interest in the same display case is a copy of the New York Herald, published April 15, 1865. In just ordinary headlines it tells of the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, and some of the details concerning the shooting of the president. Also some of the battles going on at that date.

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EARLY DAY CATTLE DRIVE TO WOODSON COUNTY

Along in the evening of April 20, 1888 a herd of cattle and horses could be seen trailing across the northwest part of Woodson County. The dust was thick as the five riders besides the trail boss, Gordon Sage brought this herd of 600 head of cattle and a remuda of 80 horses to the end of their six days journey from LaCygne, Kansas.

As the herd reached the head of Dry Creek, a mile west of the Duncan Campbell homestead and just to the south of the southwest corner of the VanHorn Ranch (now the Winterscheid farm), the riders corraled the herd for the night. This was all open range, but Gordon Sage had this particular quarter section rented.

One of these riders was a 14-year-old boy, Otis Sage, son of Gordon Sage, and it is to Otis Sage that we owe a lot of credit for the telling and writing to us of the early cattle history of northwest Woodson that is still known as the cow country. At one time Otis was considered one of the best bronc riders over this range.

During the year 1888 there were several other cow camps in the Dry Creek area. On the land where the Bob Rhea Ranch buildings were later built a man by the name of Bob Ireland from LaCygne had a cattle camp with around 350 head of cattle.

About a half mile east of the Dry Creek Cave was another cattle camp. A cow hand named Plummer who lived at this camp in a tent herded around 300 head of cattle for a man named A. Walley of Amorett, Mo. Walley sent cattle to this range the year before, 1887, and corraled them on the southwest quarter of the old VanHorn Ranch.

Just across the small creek east of the Dry Creek Cave was a large sheep camp. A flock of around 2000 sheep kept here belonged to a man named Braden of Amorett, Mo. Jake Hawk and his family lived in a small shack about a hundred yards to the east of the cave. They herded the sheep over the range where the cattle would also range. It was told that the sheep were corraled each night on the hill above the cave. There is the remains of a rock wall or fence that follows the bluff on the east side of the large rocks of the cave that may have been a part of the corral.

In telling of his first year on this range, Otis Sage said, "The first job I had working out was in '88 helping the herder, Mr. Plummer, herd those cattle for a month. Got \$10 and board. I was 14 then and thought I was quite a cow hand. Jake Hawk had his sheep nearby and we cow hands dealt the old boy a lot of grief when his sheep got on our range. Jake moved his sheep farther west the next year."

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PATRONS WHO HELP SUPPORT THE WOODSON COUNTY HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

John V. Glades Agency
Woodson County Co-op.
State Exchange Bank
Street Abstract Co., Inc.
Baker Rexall Drug Store
Krueger's Variety & Dry Goods
Leo W. Mills
Hi-way Food Basket
Farmers Co-op, Piqua
Gaulding Oil Co.
Harry O. Ashley
Swope & Son Implement Co.
H. R. Campbell & Sons -
Furniture & Undertaking
Clyde Hill
Whelan Lumber Co.
Cantrell Buick-Pontiac
Krueger's Cleaners
Gambles—The Friendly Store
Rogers Bros. Garage
Mahon Motor Co.
Charles H. Carpenter
Brown's Western Auto
Donald E. Ward
Wilma Mark
Milton Wrampe
E. E. Light
Yates Center News

Self Service Grocery
Fred C. Headrick
The Virginian Hotel
Light Hardware
Schornick Oil Co.
Paul C. Laidlaw
Smith Furniture &
Funeral Home
Woods-Perkins
Al's Jewelry
Yates Center Skelgas Co.
Blackjack Cattle Co.
Security Oil Co.
Yates Center Elevator Co.
Jasper's Shopping Spot
Bill Taylor—General Agent
Woodson Co. Farm Bureau
Daly Western Supplies
Pyeatte-Jaynes Ins. Agency
Atkin Clinic
Henry E. Stephenson
Dyer Chevrolet Co.
Linde Barber Shop
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